COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
CONSEIL DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

RECORD

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Meet the members of Council for 1999-2000

Operating funding framework needed by December

Enrolment-growth pressures mount on university campuses

The recent call of university presidents for a decision on operating funding by December of this year is, according to Paul Davenport, chair of COU, based on some very pressing realities.

Reached at his office at the University of Western Ontario, Dr. Davenport spoke to the mounting pressures surrounding enrolment growth. The pressures are most certainly increasing with every passing day, and, yes, we are all feeling anxious. How can we plan for next year's admissions intake, ensure that we can continue to accommodate the seven-plus-per-cent growth – not to mention the surge due to eleven-year-olds – and provide our current and prospective students with a quality and challenging learning experience when we don't know what our resource base will be?

"Universities will begin issuing offers of admission for September 2000 in March of 2000," explained Dr. Davenport. "Our call for a financial commitment in December leaves us with just about three months to put the schools in motion before we begin issuing approvals. This is not a comfortable timeframe. It will push the limits of even the most seasoned of planners among us."

In addition to highly skilled staff, Ontario universities have some of Canada's most notable and accomplished business leaders right on their boards. We are all becoming increasingly concerned about getting the job done – and meeting our obligations to current and future students. But we cannot move forward on an ad hoc basis. We must have a serious plan," said Dr. Davenport, "and that requires firm financial commitments."

Universities have been working with government to plan for the expansion through meetings with ministry officials and the joint Working Group on University Capacity. Robert Prichard, past chair of Council and president of the University of Toronto, said, "We are pleased that the Minister received the working group and recently asked us to refine our definitions and submit our report and recommendations by mid-November. The challenge for the province will be to respond quickly enough to meet our targets needs and to ensure a place for every willing and qualified student that fall.

This year's dramatic increase of 6,500 in first-year enrolments, which represents the highest year-over-year increase in a decade, resulted in considerable overcrowding in our classrooms and residences. While Ontario universities have managed to accommodate all of the new students this year, Dr. Davenport acknowledged that they could not pull this off again next year. "Many of us are buying in the trailers. In fact, and all of us continue to struggle to deliver quality education after operating grant cuts in the range of 25%."

This was among the messages delivered on October 8, 1999, when presidents of Ontario universities gathered at Queen's Park for a press conference to draw attention to this year's enrolment increases and stress the need for firm financial commitments to prepare for the escalating challenges. "We want to alert the public to the fact that the surge in demand is not just around the corner. It is literally at our doorstep," Dr. Davenport told the audience of reporters and assembled parliamentarians.

A recent Price-waterhouseCoopers study, commissioned by COU, projects that enrolments could increase by up to 90,000 (40%) over the next decade. As many as 31,000 additional students could be seeking university spaces in just a mere three years as a result of secondary school reform alone.

Robert Prichard and Ian Clark, presidents of COU, joined Paul Davenport as the main presenters at the press conference. Professor Prichard acknowledged that considerable good work has taken place thus far. "We have been greatly encouraged by the energy and commitment that the Hon. Dianne Cunningham and her staff have brought to the challenges we face," he said.

"As she welcome the government's announcement in the last budget that $747 million has been allocated for new capital spending for colleges and universities through the Superbuild Growth Fund. This is another clear sign that the government recognizes the importance of higher education to the future of this province.

Through the Superbuild Growth Fund, the details of which were announced by government in October 31, universities can submit proposals for grants consideration for space and equipment directly related to the delivery of programs. Proposals will be evaluated based on established criteria, including new student spaces created through the proposal. Funding that will be provided by sources other than this fund, future growth in demand for the programs to be located in a proposed new facility, and the project's contribution to developing the long-term economic strength of the community and the region.

Participants at the October 8 press conference at Queen's Park were (l-r): Ian Clark, president of COU; Paul Davenport, chair of Council and president of the University of Western Ontario; and Robert Prichard, past chair of Council and president of the University of Toronto.

"Superbuild will help to address capacity issues associated with growing enrolments and make an important difference. But there is also an urgent need for increased operating funds. Superbuild does not address the issues that we must strive to put excellent faculty in our classrooms and laboratories, or to put our campuses into operation on a daily basis," stated Professor Prichard.

Operating grants provided by the province enable us to hire faculty and staff, our laboratories purchase equipment and books, provide access for students, maintain our buildings and grounds – the list goes on. These grants are the most critical source of revenue for universities. We need assurances," said Professor Prichard, "that we will receive additional operating funding for increased enrolment and quality enhancement, and capital funding that is commensurate with additional enrolment and research requirements. Only then will we meet the real needs of our students."

The Minister has assured university presidents that she government recognizes the importance of moving forward in full partnership. She has also made it clear that she is working hard to ensure that operating funds are made available for additional enrolment and quality enhancements. Ontario universities remain hopeful that the province's government will be able to commit the necessary resources in time.

Universities need help on big challenges ahead, says *Toronto Star* economics editor

The following article, which was published on Sunday, October 24, 1999, is reprinted with the permission of the Toronto Star.

BY DAVID CRANE

In the 21st century, the knowledge-based economy, will be a brain-power economy.

That makes universities crucial, because they develop brainpower by educating knowledge workers and, privately, through research, the ideas that knowledge workers use to develop new products and processes for economic growth and jobs.

So to neglect or underfund our universities is to diminish our future.

This is something that Premier Mike Harris and Treasurer Ernie Eves should think hard about.

Since the early 1990s, provincial funding for our universities has been squeezed significantly. Provincial operating grants per full-time equivalent enrolment in our universities, adjusted for inflation, were cut 22 per cent between the 1991-92 and 1998-99 academic years. One of the first things the Harris government did

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New chair of Council

Dr. Paul Davenport, president of The University of Western Ontario, is the new chair of the Council of Ontario Universities. He began his two-year term at the beginning of September.

Dr. Davenport taught economics at McGill University from 1973 to 1989, and also served as vice-principal for planning and computer services from 1986 to 1989. From 1989 to 1994, he served as president of the University of Alberta before becoming Western's 11th president in 1994.

His research in economics has centred on the theory of economic growth and interprovincial and Canadian economic relationships. He is a member of many local and national boards and past chair of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada.

Dr. Davenport succeeds Prof. Robert Prichard, president of the University of Toronto, who assumes the position of past chair.

Survey shows grads doing well in job market

Ontario university graduates are doing exceptionally well in today's job market, according to the results of a recent survey. The overall employment rate was 96.7% for 1995 graduates of undergraduate degree programs two years after graduation, with rates consistently high across all programs from social sciences and humanities each at 96.1%, law at 95.8%, business at 97.2% and nursing at 98.9%.

The survey was conducted by the Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC) on behalf of the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) under a contract with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The survey summarizes the employment experiences of 1996 graduates of undergraduate university programs in Ontario six months and two years after graduation.

Over 25,000 surveys were completed, representing 34% of the Class of 1996. The results were compiled in the *Findings Report: 1998-99 Ontario University Graduate Survey*.

Highlights from the Findings Report include:

- Two years after graduation, 85.1% of graduates employed full-time considered their work either closely or somewhat related to their university education.
- The average annual salary was $32,400 for graduates of undergraduate degree programs two years after graduation.

Studies will assist in planning for surge in enrolment

COU recently commissioned two studies, one on quality indicators and one on university faculty labour markets, to be conducted by Dr. David Smith, former principal of Queen's University and former chair of the government-appointed Advisory Panel on Future Directions for Postsecondary Education.

The first study, *Quality Indicators and Quality Enhancement in Universities: Experiences in Other Jurisdictions*, will examine the effectiveness of policies being used in other jurisdictions including the United Kingdom, Australia, other Canadian provinces and American states viewed as leaders in the use of such indicators.

Dr. Ian Clark, president of COU, said, "As we look to the enrolment crush that will soon be upon us, we must be absolutely confident that we are engaging in the most efficient planning possible. We must be capable of ensuring that Ontario students receive a university education of a quality comparable to that in competing jurisdictions. This study on quality indicators will enable us to establish realistic benchmarks."

A second study, *The Prospective Labour Market for University Faculty: Implications for Ontario*, will identify approaches used in other jurisdictions to respond to tighter labour markets as well as identify the employment conditions that influence the attractiveness to prospective faculty.

"When we consider retirements, the increased faculty required to accommodate the surge in enrolment and the need to bring our student faculty ratios in line with the national average, we are looking at recruiting the equivalent of the existing full-time faculty complement of approximately 13,000," said Dr. Clark. (See chart.)

"We already know that competitive pressures are rising sharply around the world. We need to prepare an effective response for Ontario," Dr. Clark cautioned. "We had better be tuned into the marketplace, because this will be a phenomenon common throughout North America."

Both studies will be made public when completed in early 2000.

Working Group on University Research to advise government

A joint Working Group on University Research made up of senior representatives from government and universities has been formed. The working group's mandate is to provide advice to the government on ways to support basic and applied research in all disciplines at Ontario universities to further their economic, educational, social and cultural missions.

The working group will:

- review the findings of a study by Prof. Heather Munroe-Blum, University of Toronto, on the role of postsecondary research in the broader innovation strategy of the province;
- recommend ways to increase Ontario's share of research funding from national granting councils and other federal bodies;
- recommend ways to improve and strengthen existing Ontario programs in support of university research;
- recommend ways to encourage knowledge transfer from university research; and
- act as a sounding board for potential government initiatives that could affect university research.

The establishment of the working group is an important step forward given that Canada lags behind its G-7 counterparts in terms of gross domestic product spent on research and development.

The working group is co-chaired by Ken Kozra, deputy minister of the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology, and Dr. Ian Clark, president of UOIT.

Its government members are:

- Dr. Bruce Archibald, assistant deputy minister of science and technology, Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology;
- Brad Graham, assistant deputy minister (acting) of integrated policy and planning, Ministry of Health;
- Phil Hewitt, assistant deputy minister of the Office of Economic Policy, Ministry of Finance;
- David Trick, assistant deputy minister of postsecondary education, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Its university members are:

- Dr. William Bridges, vice-president, research of The University of Western Ontario, and chair of the Ontario Council on University Research (OCUR);
- Dr. Peter George, president of McMaster University;
- Dr. Harbinder Gilbert, president of Lakehead University;
- Dr. William Leggett, principal of Queen's University;
- Prof. Robert Prichard, president of the University of Toronto;
- Dr. Robert Rosehart, president of Wilfrid Laurier University;
- Dr. Mordechai Rozanski, president of the University of Guelph;
- Dr. Michael Stevenson, vice-president, academic affairs and provost of York University;
- Dr. Richard Van Loon, president of Carleton University.

Universities respond to teacher shortage

Ontario universities responded to an acute teacher shortage in specific program areas by expanding enrolment this fall by more than 500 spaces. A strategic program, established by the Government of Ontario, addressed the most urgent discipline shortages that included technology, studies, French and mathematics.

The projected teacher shortage was first formally identified by the Ontario College of Teachers in November 1998, when the basic age profile of teachers nearing retirement was exacerbated by early retirement departures.

The government is providing $3.75 million in 1999-2000 to increase enrolment. Additional funding will be provided annually for at least four years. In 2001-2002, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities will assess the ongoing need for additional graduates in light of teacher demand.

Surge in demand at top of retreat agenda

On September 27, Executive Heads met to discuss major issues and establish strategic priorities for the academic year. Topping this year's agenda at the traditional fall retreat was the issue of the surge in enrolment – a surge that could see as many as 90,000 additional students seeking university opportunities over the next decade.

Dianne Cunningham, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, along with senior members of her staff joined in the morning portion of the retreat. Executive Heads updated the Minister on the status of many initiatives being undertaken by Ontario universities to help address priority areas in higher education. These initiatives included closer co-operation with colleges, expansion of programs where shortages have been identified, performance indicators on employment, earnings and skills match, and enhancing the use of technology in university teaching.

Key among the issues discussed were this year's increases in first year enrolments of approximately 6.6%. The increases and associated implications were the focus of the Council meeting on October 8, 1999, and a press conference held the same day.

Minister Dianne Cunningham shares a light moment with (l-r) Fred Gorringe, chair, OCUA and president of The University of Western Ontario; Ross Paul, president of the University of Windsor; and David Trick, assistant deputy minister of postsecondary education, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

The Minister with (l-r) Ron Hunter, president of Laurentian University; Fred Gilbert, president of Lakehead University; Lorna Marsden, president of York University; and Richard Van Loon, president of Carleton University.

Claude Lajeunesse (middle), president of Ryerson Polytechnic University, and Gilles Patry, vice-rector (academic) of the University of Ottawa, with the Minister.

From left to right: Deputy Minister Robert Christie, the Minister and OCUA Chair Fred Gorringe.

COU publishes highlights of three major reports

How well prepared are university graduates for the new knowledge-based economy, and how will Ontario universities meet new challenges? To help respond to these important questions and open up discussion about policy questions, the Council of Ontario Universities recently published three brochures that provide highlights of major reports written by the Council over the past year.

The first highlights key aspects of the *Findings Report: 1998 99 Ontario University Graduate Survey* conducted by the Ontario Universities' Application Centre on behalf of COU under a contract with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The report summarizes the employment experiences of 1996 graduates of undergraduate university programs in Ontario, six months and two years after graduation.

The second highlights material from *Ontario Universities: 1998 Resource Document*, which provides a comprehensive review of statistics and trends in policy areas relevant to Ontario universities. These areas include grants and revenues, jurisdictional comparisons, support for research, tuition fees, education and the job market, student financial assistance, university infrastructure, and faculty and staff.

The third highlights the key facts from *Ontario's Students, Ontario's Future*, a report produced by COU and released earlier this year. The report summarizes the findings of the PricewaterhouseCoopers analysis of enrolment projections and capacity, as well as the findings of the Angus Reid public opinion research.

All three *Highlights* brochures are available on the COU web site (www.cou.on.ca) or by contacting Public Affairs at (416) 979-2165 ext. 236.

Conference on building competitive city regions scheduled for November

COU, along with the Canadian Urban Institute, the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, will be sponsoring a conference, "Building Competitive City Regions in the Knowledge Economy: The Power of Business/Community/Educator Partnerships," on November 17, 1999.

The Hon. David Crombie will chair the conference, and Steve Paikin, host of TVO's Studio 2, will act as facilitator. David Lindsay, president and CEO of the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board; Shelagh Whittaker, president and CEO of EDS Systemhouse; and Dr. Paul Davenport, president of The University of Western Ontario, will be among the featured speakers. For registration information on the conference, which will be held at the Mississauga Living Arts Centre, contact the Canadian Urban Institute at (416) 598-1606 ext. 234.

Fall issue of INFO magazine published

The fall issue of INFO magazine has been published and circulated to high schools throughout the province. This year, 230,000 copies were printed to meet the growing needs of both secondary school students and guidance counsellors to provide general, current information on all of Ontario's universities. The fall issue is also available on the Ontario Universities' Application Centre's web site (www.ouac.on.ca).

INFO magazine is published twice annually, the next issue, which is geared for counsellors, will be available in spring 2000.

RECORD

COUNCIL OF ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES

CONSEIL DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ONTARIO

Council of Ontario Universities
Suite 1100
180 Dundas Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 1Z8
Tel: (416) 979-2165 ext. 236
Fax: (416) 979-8635
http://www.cou.on.ca

Task Force on Learning Technologies to address system-wide issues

Computers, cell phones and the Internet are changing the way we live and do business. University campuses — where these technologies offer new methods to teach, research and communicate — are no less affected.

Most Ontario universities are conducting work in the field of learning technology, to assess its use and impact. Many of these initiatives, however, are individual and do not capture systematic issues. The COU Task Force on Learning Technologies has been established to examine the critical issues related to the use of learning technologies in teaching and learning. These issues include assessing the cost implications and effectiveness of expanding the application of learning technologies within teaching and learning.

Senior representatives from university, industry and government make up the task force. Industry participation, which includes CANARIE, IBM, HAC and Silicon Graphics, will be especially valuable since both the providers of learning technologies and those who use the technologies as a convenient means of arranging training for managerial and professional staff are represented.

David Johnston, president of the University of Waterloo and an internationally recognized expert in learning technologies, will chair the task force.

Access to Opportunities Program (ATOP) exceeds targets

In the 1998 budget, the government announced the creation of the Access to Opportunities Program (ATOP) to respond to the shortage of skilled high-tech professionals in Ontario. The program was designed to double university undergraduate enrolments in computer science and high-demand engineering. The initial goal was a doubling of the number of places by 17,000. The response to ATOP resulted in a total of 23,000 new spaces — 6,000 more enrolments than originally planned.

Update on degree-completion accord

May 6, 1999, marked the official signing of the Ontario College-University Degree-Completion Accord. The accord, which was designed to enhance opportunities for college diploma graduates to earn degrees from Ontario universities, sets out a series of principles for developing degree-completion arrangements between colleges and universities. Beyond agreements already in existence as a result of the accord, to date degree-completion opportunities are being developed for college graduates in more than 30 program areas.

Ontario Universities' Fair tops last year's successful turnout

The third annual Ontario Universities' Fair, held this year at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on September 17, 18 and 19, was another resounding success. More than 38,000 people, primarily from the Greater Toronto Area, attended the fair, up by 3,000 from last year's then record turnout of 35,000.

All Ontario's universities were represented at the fair, providing a display booth and scheduled presentations. Organized by the Signature Committee on Secondary School Liaison as part of the University Information Program, the fair enabled high-school students and their parents to meet with representatives from all the universities. It also gave them the opportunity to load up on information and material (as much as they can carry!) on undergraduate programs. One university alone distributed over 22,000 of its information handbooks, plus an additional 15,000 various faculty publications.

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Published by Public Affairs
Council of Ontario Universities
Suite 1100, 180 Dundas St. W., Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 1Z8
T.E. (416) 979-2165 FAX (416) 979-8635
http://www.cou.on.ca